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AN IDEALIZED PORTRAIT  
FRAGMENT OF HELLENISTIC WOOL TAPESTRY  
FOUNDERS SOCIETY, OCTAVIA W. BATES FUND

## A FRAGMENT OF HELLENISTIC WOOL TAPESTRY

The Founders Society, Octavia W. Bates Fund, has presented the Textile Department with a fragment of late Hellenistic wool tapestry of outstanding quality, part of a hanging or shroud.<sup>1</sup>

A woman's head, approximately half life size, is represented in practically frontal view, turned almost imperceptibly towards the right shoulder. This very slight turn receives a sharp accent by the deep-set golden brown eyes, half veiled by heavy lids, turned to the extreme angle. The finely designed nose with sensitive nostrils, the slightly open mouth, the shapely full chin, the wide low brow, all contribute to give to the picture a truly portrait character. The hair, chestnut with reddish lights, is parted in the center and arranged in a series of wavy locks covering the ears, and forming a loop of the Apollo Belvedere type. A golden taenia set with a large red stone—cornelian?—and a plain golden earring with two pearls pendent, bear out the general impression of fastidiousness of moderation, the *μηδὲν ἄγαν*, a subtlety observed also in the simplicity of the dress, of which only one shoulder strap is preserved. The round nimbus marks the portrait as of the idealized rather than realistic type, a type which is well attested by fragments in the museums of Berlin, Paris, Moscow and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

The modeling is achieved by imperceptible grades of shading, a perfect illustration of the old Roman phrase *acu pingere*, with the reservation that it is not "needle-painting," but "loom-painting," a woven picture. The delicate violet and pink purple accents around neck and nose become more pronounced on the eyelids and, with the straight line of the lashes, give the portrait a character tragic, almost sinister.<sup>3</sup>

Our fancy strays to famous unhappy, rather wicked, great women known to history and legend, but we need not feel bound to attach any special name to the portrait.

Whether the portrait once adorned a hanging or a garment can not now be decided. The large size points to the former, yet we know of many instances of garments thus adorned. Thus, when Ausonius, the poet from Bordeaux, became consul in 379, the emperor Gratian presented him with a trabea in which a portrait of Constantius was inwoven, and such official mantles are known through the consular diptychs. That of Stilicho, in the treasury of Monza cathedral, shows the head of Galla Placidia. Literary documents also point to this custom; we need mention only letters by St. John Chrysostomus and by Asterius, bishop of Amaseia, who hurled defiance at "the class of people whose hearts are filled with admiration for this vanity . . . a kind of weaving, an art of no good and over-artificial . . . trifling and not serious work . . . And when thus dressed . . . they are stared at like painted walls and in the street the children swarm around them, laugh at them, point with their fingers at the pictures on their garments . . ."

Our lady belongs to a considerably earlier age when the Hellenistic mind could still enjoy beauty of design and color to the utmost, without moral scruples. Both technical and aesthetic reasons, the good taste and moderation of coiffure and jewelry, as well as the exquisite texture of the weave and fineness of the woollen yarns, force us to place the fragment very early, in the second or third century, possibly even earlier. For a very early date

<sup>1</sup>35.103. Height 6¾ inches; width 4¾ inches.

<sup>2</sup>Wulff and Volbach, *Spätantike und Koptische Stoffe aus ägyptischen Grabfunden in den staatlichen Museen*, Berlin, 1926; V. de Grunewald, *Les caractéristiques de l'art copte*.

<sup>3</sup>An expression not unlike that of our portrait is found on the beautiful Hermes of the Victoria and Albert Museum. A. F. Kendrick, *Catalogue of Textiles from Burying Grounds in Egypt*.

speaking also the refinement of almost impressionistic indetermination, a hankering towards Scopasian expression, the feeling of *Weltschmerz*, so characteristic of the late Hellenistic period.

Another question is the place of origin. We propose Syria rather than Egypt. In Syria woolen tapestry weaving of finest texture has a very old tradition; we read in the Iliad of "beautiful gowns, worked by Sidonian women." The fabric of these gowns may have been not unlike that of the fragments found in a fourth century B. C. Greek tomb near Kertch, in Crimea, which display beautifully shaded, fairly realistic ducks on purple ground. The craft remained alive for a very long span of time. When the celebrated pilgrimage of the four bishops—Sigfried of Mainz, Gunther of Bamberg, William of Utrecht and Otto of Regensburg, with a retinue of more than seven thousand—reached Syria in 1064, the major portion fell in battle against the Mohammedans or succumbed to sickness and privation. The dead body of bishop Gunther, chancellor of the empire, was brought back, to be buried in his

cathedral at Bamberg, wrapped in a shroud of finest silk tapestry on which was represented an emperor on horseback between two victories.<sup>4</sup>

While textiles have been preserved practically intact in the dry soil of Egypt and, since the discoveries of the last decades of the nineteenth century, have found a place in practically all textile collections, it has been taken for granted that the seasonal rains of Syria would render impossible the preservation of early textiles buried in the soil. Recently, however, the French excavations of Palmyra have brought to light a number of fabrics from two tombs which can be dated in the second century.<sup>5</sup> Thus a new field of speculation has been opened, and with further discoveries in a near future our splendid fragment may find its companions, loom-paintings distinguished from the so-called Coptic tapestries with their exclusively linear modeling, by the perfection of modeling with imperceptible grades of shading.

Adele Coulin Weibel.

<sup>4</sup>Arthur Martin, *Mélanges d'archéologie*, 1851.

<sup>5</sup>R. Pfister, *Textiles de Palmyre, découverts par le Service des Antiquités du Haut Commissariat de la République Française dans la Necropole de Palmyre*, Paris, 1934.



SUNSET IN THE HILLS, NEW YORK  
ALEXANDER H. WYANT  
D. M. FERRY, JR. FUND



NATURE'S WONDERLAND  
THOMAS DOUGHTY  
GIBBS-WILLIAMS FUND

## EARLY AMERICAN LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS

Landscape painting in America had a good beginning. It had its greatest impetus early in the nineteenth century in that group of nature-lovers generally designated as the "Hudson River School" because they sought for their subject matter in the attractive mountain scenery of the Catskills and the Adirondacks. Their early attempts to establish a native school of landscape painting was but part of a movement that was going on in the field of literature, architecture and the decorative arts as well.

The second war with England, lasting from 1812 to 1814, was responsible for a marked change in American conditions. A second time the raw recruits of the new country had beaten both on land and sea

the most disciplined soldiers and sailors of the British realm. The embargoes during the war had taught America that she must be economically independent; that she must herself make raw materials into the manufactured products which had formerly come from abroad; that she must not again be caught unprepared for such emergencies. On the one hand she was buoyed up with a new assurance that she was the equal of so formidable a foe, and on the other there was a revulsion of feeling against her most constant enemy, England, a feeling which played some part in the discontinuance of British tradition. Admiration for our former ally France had led us to acquire a taste for French things, and we see the Georgian furniture of the

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LANDSCAPE  
ARTIST UNKNOWN

PRESENTED BY MISS EUPHEMIA HOLDEN IN MEMORY OF HER MOTHER, MRS. E. G. HOLDEN

home give place to the Empire style, or such an excellent American modification of it as that of Duncan Phyfe. Soon domestic and commercial architecture becomes too independent of foreign styles, loses all sense of proportion and runs amuck in the ingenious embellishments which some one has aptly called "Steamboat Gothic." In literature, Emerson, the Sage of Concord, in his address "The American Scholar" states that "our day of dependence or long apprenticeship to other lands draws to a close," and points out that occasions arise that must be sung, or they will sing themselves. In literature that little group at Concord led the way.

This movement engendered in the artists in and about New York pride in the beauty and resources of their native land, and with a self-reliance that was characteristic of the day, they studied assiduously in the presence of nature, imparting to their topographical pictures such a warmth of feeling that today we are beginning to

reappraise the works of such men as Thomas Doughty, Ashur B. Durand, John F. Kensett, Thomas Cole, William Sonntag, and others. In these impassioned interpretations of the American scene they laid the foundation of native landscape painting which has come down through the century as our most distinctive art.

Of this group, Thomas Doughty (1793-1856), was the earliest. He gave up his trade as leather manufacturer rather late in life in order to follow the pursuit of the painter. His landscape, *In Nature's Wonderland*,<sup>1</sup> purchased from the income of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, is an excellent and detailed transcript of nature, representing the rugged scenery of the Adirondacks.

Two other delightful landscapes of about the same period were presented by Miss Euphemia Holden, in memory of her mother, Mrs. E. G. Holden, who was one of the original incorporators of the Detroit Museum of Art. One of these is a

<sup>1</sup>Canvas: H. 24½"; W. 30". Signed and dated on rock, lower center, *T. Doughty 1853*.



LANDSCAPE  
WILLIAM HART

PRESENTED BY MISS EUPHEMIA HOLDEN IN MEMORY OF HER MOTHER, MRS. E. G. HOLDEN

painting<sup>2</sup> by William Hart, N. A. (1823-1894), which shows a rock-ribbed, quiet pool in a setting of summer foliage. The other,<sup>3</sup> by an unknown artist, derives from the same group. With its rugged foreground, a cascade flanked by sturdy rock formations, and with its delicately-tinted rolling landscape that emerges in the distance in the outlines of a mountain range meeting the sky, it is a composition which shows a thoughtful choice of subject and an understanding of artistic principle.

The fourth work, *Sunset in the Hills, New York*,<sup>4</sup> by Alexander H. Wyant (1836-1892), purchased from the income of the D. M. Ferry, Jr., Fund, is closely akin in its aim to the Hudson River School, at the same time showing more sophistication and a greater expression of mood than one finds in the earlier works of this period. Wyant, better known and more highly regarded as an American artist, had a career not vastly different from his predecessors and contemporaries. Born at Defiance,

Ohio, in 1836, as a youth he was interested in drawing and developed a good deal of talent in this direction. He had no opportunity to see pictures until, upon reaching his majority, he visited the neighboring city of Cincinnati, where he was inspired by an early example of Inness to become an artist. Encouraged by Inness in this resolve, he had a brief period of study abroad with Hans Gude, an exponent of the Düsseldorf school.

Upon his return to America, he joined a government expedition to explore the West, was stricken with paralysis, and returned and settled in the Catskills to spend the remainder of his life. Despite his physical disability and deprived of the use of his right arm, he learned with his left hand to paint the familiar scenes of his surroundings to such good effect that he divides with Inness the honor of bringing American landscape painting to a degree of perfection, and he left behind him many fine works. This early Wyant ad-

<sup>2</sup>Canvas: H. 11"; W. 15". Signed lower right *Wm. Hart*.

<sup>3</sup>Canvas: H. 14"; W. 20".

<sup>4</sup>Canvas: H. 15"; W. 26¾". Signed and dated in lower right corner *A. H. Wyant 1869*.





THE OLD RESERVOIR, PHILADELPHIA  
ARTIST UNKNOWN  
GIFT OF WILLIAM H. THOMSON

mirably supplements *Summer Landscape*, another painting by Wyant in the Detroit collection, a painting done some twenty years later when Wyant had reached that mature style which sees American landscape in lyrical and poetic mood.

In contrast to these four paintings of similar intent is the picture *The Old Reservoir, Philadelphia*,<sup>5</sup> the site of the present Pennsylvania Museum, by an unknown artist, presented by Mr. William H. Thomson. This picture is a curious and delightful mixture of truth and fantasy and would seem to have its inspiration in the classic landscape of Claude Lorrain or Richard Wilson. It shows the reservoir across the Schuylkill looming to a considerable height. The side of the hill nearest the stream is covered with a bank of trees with a pretentious colonial house in the foreground. A Pseudo-Greek architecture appears in two little circular temples and in the porticoes of two small buildings which seem to surmount a water-power spillway. The composition is well balanced on the near side of the river by

a stone-flagged wharf with trees rising from the bank in the foreground. A curious covered bridge remotely suggesting the Rialto of Venice is flung across the river in the middle distance. An old blue Staffordshire plate in our collection of historical china showing the "Dam and Waterworks, Philadelphia" but without the acropolis at the right would indicate that the painting of our artist is accurate in essentials, even though he gives flight to his imagination in some details.

Unfortunately for America, the self-confidence of the artist was not long sustained. He felt the need of a sophisticated point of view and a sounder technique and did not regard his training as complete until he had paid tribute to the art centers of Europe.

When one looks at these first native attempts at landscape painting, one wishes that the self-reliance and wholesome attitude of these early painters might have continued for a longer period, for out of it would have come something fine and strong and with a greater American flavor.

Clyde H. Burroughs.

<sup>5</sup>Canvas: H. 24"; W. 32".



## ADRIAEN VAN OSTADE'S "PORTRAIT OF A GIRL"

The small and charming "Portrait of a Girl"<sup>1</sup> by Adriaen van Ostade, recently presented by the Founders Society through the William H. Murphy Fund, is the initial painting by this important Dutch master of the 17th Century to enter the Museum and introduces the artist in a delightful souvenir of his style.

A notable feature of the painting is the generally low key of intensity, produced with colors, thinly applied, that vary from a smooth gray in the background to a warm shade of plum in the girl's blouse. Her brown hair, drawn straight back from a wide forehead, is partly covered with a little cap, worn in the attractive manner typical of the Dutch peasant and accented with deft touches of white, while the darkish flesh-tints in the modelling of her ugly, yet amusing young face accord perfectly with the even

tonality achieved by the other pigments. Rather pensively, she inclines her head and casts her eyes downward over her right shoulder.

Few artists, before or since Ostade, have been more successful in fusing the range of their palettes into the mellow atmosphere of color which we find represented here to such an admirable degree. Indeed, this harmonious quality in Ostade's best work stands out as one of the principal virtues of his mature style during the second period of his activity, extending roughly from the year 1640 to 1670, and distinguishes this little masterpiece as a work of his prime. In earlier compositions, he had shown a preference for harsher tones and light effects, rather than the careful, sensitive blending of color which he adopted later. In the same way, the groups in his first pictures contained many

<sup>1</sup>Oil on panel. H.  $3\frac{7}{16}$  inches by W.  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches.



figures in which violent actions and caricatured heads played a prominent part. Themes of a restful variety, consisting of fewer and more naturalistic figures, formed during the second stage of his development the more usual subjects for his brush. Peaceful domestic scenes, conversation pieces, and quiet games rather than quarrels, replaced the agitated crowds which filled the artist's youthful compositions, and at the same time he also tried his skill at small genre portraits of the type under consideration, for which members of the peasant class furnished the most frequent models. The features, usually observed, as in our miniature head, through the eyes of a rather quiet and dry humorist, are lovingly recorded with that feeling of intimacy at once so characteristic of Dutch painting in general.

After 1670, a falling off in the quality of Ostade's work becomes evident, and until his death fifteen years later he grew increasingly more addicted to sleek execution, and to gay insipid colors and expressions. His later figures are reduced to mere general types, lacking both the individuality and character of a portrait like that of the young girl, which was certainly painted when Ostade had reached the height of his powers, and for the reasons indicated may be placed with confidence in the neighborhood of the year 1650. The painter's familiar signature, the letters of his name combined into the monogram *A.O.*, appears without date in the lower left corner of the panel.

This portrait apparently was not prepared as a preliminary sketch for a larger painting, nor was it based upon any of Ostade's known etchings. Undoubtedly an independent creation, it bears in other respects a marked resemblance to certain figures in paintings of Ostade's developed style, to mention one example in particular, the artist's celebrated genre masterpiece in the Museum at The Hague, called "The Fiddler." The woman seated with a child at the right of the picture is

essentially an older sister of the maiden in our portrait. Her features are depicted with the same loving care.

A few important factors seem worth remembering in connection with Adriaen van Ostade's life. He was born in Haarlem in December, 1610, the son of Jan Hendricx, who came originally from a small hamlet near Eindhoven called Ostade—the modern Ostedt—whence Adriaen Jancz derived his name. The artist's entire life was spent in Haarlem, where he set up as a painter, was elected Dean of the Guild in 1662, and where he was buried on May 2, 1685. About 1627, he and Adriaen Brouwer became associated with Frans Hals as fellow-pupils, but in their particular choice of informal scenes from the everyday life of the lower classes, both remained more closely identified with one another than with their master. Similarly, with regard to the matter of painting, Ostade's carefully blended colors and his system of light and shade resemble but little the work of Hals. It is much more likely that Ostade's method of shading developed out of a study of Rembrandt.

To define in brief terms the exact niche filled by Ostade in Dutch Art is somewhat difficult. Obviously, in so far as versatility and originality are concerned, he could not touch the accomplishments of painters like Brouwer and Jan Steen. Ostade confined the subject matter of his large number of paintings, drawings, and etchings exclusively to the lower middle class, but he was so consistent in depicting the character of this class and its *milieu* that the popular idea of the life of the bourgeoisie in 17th century Holland is based mainly on his representations. Perhaps, Hofstede de Groot<sup>2</sup> has summarized better than any other critic of Ostade our master's relative standing: "Although, no doubt, comparisons are always unsatisfactory, still it may be said that Ostade occupies in Dutch Art much the same position relatively to Jan Steen as Teniers holds in Flemish Art compared to Brouwer."

John S. Newberry, Jr.

<sup>2</sup>Hofstede de Groot, *Catalogue of Dutch Painters*, 1910, p. 141.



EIGHT BELLS  
WINSLOW HOMER  
GIFT OF JOHN S. NEWBERRY, JR.

## TWO ETCHINGS BY WINSLOW HOMER

Mr. John S. Newberry, Jr., whose valued services have been contributed to the Print Department during the past year, has given to the Institute two etchings by Winslow Homer.

This master (1836-1910) gave to the American scene an interpretation which was original and vigorous. He succeeded to no great tradition and from first to last was uninfluenced by what had gone before. His feeling was rooted in his own land and his art was a personal reflection of its youth and vitality.

Homer made a series of six etchings, two of which, *The Life Line* and *Eight Bells*, have been given by Mr. Newberry.

At the age of nineteen Homer answered an advertisement of a Boston lithographic printing house for "a boy with a taste for drawing." He remained here two years, working incessantly, absorbing all the knowledge that could be gathered. He tells us himself "that from the time I took my nose off that lithographic stone I have

had no master, and never shall have any."

His illustrations for *Ballou's Pictorial*, and his wood engravings made for *Harper's Weekly* during the Civil War are, with the six etchings, his complete work in the graphic arts.

*The Life Line*, etched in 1884, was a smaller plate than the others, and differs from them in its free linear, rather than tonal quality. *The Life Line* had, of course, a story telling appeal, a thing rejected by many of the moderns with horror. Had this, however, been its only appeal it should rightly have been forgotten. It had a striking dramatic quality, a feeling for the sea in its turbulent power, and a fine sense of design in the watery mountains and the sky.

Homer had studied the human figure too, and in that of the limp woman saved from shipwreck we sense the power which this practically self-taught artist had achieved.

The second etching, *Eight Bells*, was a



THE LIFE LINE  
WINSLOW HOMER  
GIFT OF JOHN S. NEWBERRY, JR.

plate of which Homer thought highly himself. Here again is the realism which made it immediately popular, but, again, the dramatic quality which lifted it above any dull photographic representation.

The closely hatched lines of the captain and his mate standing against the dark windswept water have the power of a race of hardy seamen, and the light has

been distributed with a sensitive understanding of its value in the design. It falls with beauty on the masses of water and clouds, gives a sheen to the helmets of the sailors, and offers a note of relief to the darkness of the sea.

The two etchings will represent in the Print Department the graphic art of a great American artist.

Isabel Weadock.



PORTRAIT HEAD  
GERHARD MARCKS  
GERMAN CONTEMPORARY  
GIFT OF MRS. WILLIAM CLAY

## CALENDAR

### EXHIBITIONS

- March 3-31            The Prison Set by G. B. Piranesi.  
March 17-31          Exhibition of Modern German Watercolors.  
March 25-April 25   Prints by Toulouse-Lautrec.

### SPECIAL LECTURES

(Friday evenings at 8:30)

- March 20, 27, April 3   "Art in the Modern World"—free illustrated lectures by Edgar  
P. Richardson, Assistant Director.

### RADIO TALKS

(Sundays at 2:00 p. m. over CKLW, by John D. Morse)

- March 15   "Make Use of Your Museum."  
March 22   "American Primitive Art."  
March 29   "The Egyptian Gallery."  
April   5   "Is Sculpture a Lost Art?"  
April   12   "Hudson River Landscapes."

### GALLERY TALKS

(Tuesdays at 2:30 p. m. and Thursdays at 8:00 p. m.)

- March 17 and 19       "The Crafts of the Pilgrim Century."  
March 24 and 26       "American Art Comes of Age: The 19th Century."  
March 31 and April 2   "20th Century Painting."

### GARDEN CENTER

- March 19—2:00 p. m.   "Birds"—free illustrated lecture by Dr. Pirnie.

### WORLD ADVENTURE SERIES

(Illustrated lectures)

- March 15—3:30 p. m.   "By Sailboat Through the South Seas"—by Howard Cleaves.  
                              8:30 p. m.   "Adventuring in Alaska"—by Father Hubbard.  
March 19—8:30 p. m.   "Imperial Ethiopia"—by Burton Holmes.  
March 22—3:30 p. m.   "Lovely Kashmir and the Taj Mahal"—by Capt. John Noel.  
March 29—3:30 p. m.   "Around Cape Horn in a 26-foot Skiff"—by Amos Burg.  
April   5—3:30 p. m.   "London and Rural England"—by Burton Holmes.  
                              8:30 p. m.   "Soviet Russia"—by Burton Holmes.